

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2938

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0306

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, BM

SUBJ: THAI FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS BURMA

REF: RANGOON 0233

1. THAI FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT PACHARIYANGKUN PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO BURMA JANUARY 25-28. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN, DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL LEK NAEOMALI, FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY WONGSE POLNIKORN (FORMER RTG AMBASSADOR TO BURMA), AND SEVERAL OTHER RANKING MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS.

2. WHILE IN BURMA, UPADIT AND MEMBERS OF HIS DELEGATION MET WITH SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GENERAL SAN YU, PRIME MINISTER U SEIN WIN, FOREIGN MINISTER U HLA PHONE, AND DEFENSE MINISTER MAJ. GEN. KYAW HTIN.

3. ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES, THE VISIT WAS AT RTG INITIATIVE, AND THE BURMESE POSTURE WAS LARGELY ONE OF LISTENING TO WHAT THE THAI HAD TO SAY. PRINCIPAL TOPICS COVERED WERE:

A. BORDER/INSURGENT PROBLEMS. ACCORDING TO A RANKING
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BURMA ARMY OFFICER PRESENT AT THE DISCUSSIONS, THE THAI SAID THEY WOULD TAKE ACTION AGAINST INSURGENT/NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING GROUPS ALONG THE BORDER. HE AND OTHER GUB OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT ANY REALLY DECISIVE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN IN THIS REGARD. THE THAI MILITARY ATTACHE, COL. APITEP INTARAPITAK, TOLD OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE THAT THE VISIT RESULTED IN BETTER "UNDER-

STANDING" BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, THOUGH THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS. HE SAID THE JANUARY 18-22 BURMA ARMY INCURSION INTO THAILAND WAS DISCUSSED BUT WAS NOT AN IMPORTANT ISSUE. HE DESCRIBED THE INCURSION AS "ACCIDENTAL" AND OF NO MAJOR CONCERN, AND HE ANTICIPATED NO SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE EVENT OF A FUTURE INCIDENT OF THIS NATURE. THERE WAS NO DECISION TO RESUME MEETINGS OF THE JOINT BORDER COMMITTEE.

B. FISHING DISPUTES. THE THAI PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT VENTURE WHICH WOULD GIVE THAI FISHERMAN LEGAL ACCESS TO BURMESE WATERS MET WITH A COOL GUB RESPONSE, ACCORDING TO A BURMESE NAVAL OFFICER WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THIS ASPECT OF THE DISCUSSIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE VISIT WAS ABOUT AS SUCCESSFUL AS COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED IN VIEW OF THE LONGSTANDING PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THE DEEP-SEATED BURMESE SUSPICIONS OF THAI MOTIVES. THE KEY TO IMPROVED BURMA-THAI RELATIONS IS CESSATION OF THAI SUPPORT AND SANCTUARY FOR ANTI-GUB INSURGENTS OPERATING OUT OF THAILAND, AND UNTIL THE BURMESE SEE EFFECTIVE RTG ACTION ON THIS MATTER THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THAI OVERTURES FOR CLOSER COOPERATION IN ANY FIELD. IN TIME, THE APPARENT SLIGHT STIFFENING OF THE RTG ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INSURGENTS COULD LEAD TO A GUB REASSESSMENT OF THE THAI POSITION; HOWEVER, THE GUB AS OF NOW IS FAR FROM CONVINCED OF RTG SINCERITY. OSBORN

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